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AUTHOR Isenberg, Joan
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ABSTRACT

This paper indicates the importance of interpersonal skills for the preschool teacher, explores the role of the preschool teacher as a leader, and provides guidelines for assessing teacher competency and developing more effective teachers. Concepts associated with effective leadership as well as specific teacher tasks that require leadership qualities are identified. Leadership is said to be a necessary dimension of each of the teacher's several roles, whether instructional, relational or decision-making. In the context of relational and decision making roles, working with parents, managing volunteers, assessment and evaluation are discussed. Also included are guidelines describing desirable teacher competencies in five areas: child development, classroom management, interpersonal relations, personal competence and program design. (Author/RH)

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Requisite Competencies for the Early Childhood Educator: Suggested Guidelines for use in Pre-Service and In-Service Training

A paper presented at the annual meeting of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Atlanta, November, 1979.

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Joan Isenberg, Ed.D
Department of Education
George Mason University
November 10, 1979

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Requisite Competencies for the Early Childhood Educator: Suggested Guidelines for use in Pre-Service and In-Service Education.

AGENDA

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INTRODUCTION

Authorities in the field of early childhood education have long maintained that specific and complete training is a pre-requisite to becoming an effective teacher of young children. Piaget indicated that the younger the child is to be taught, the MORE training and education the teacher should possess. He suggests that the more one wishes to appeal to the spontaneous activities in which young children engage, the more initiative and activity needs to be assumed by the teacher (Piaget, Science of Education and the Psychology of the Child, NY, Viking Press, 1969).

It appears, then, that a major ingredient in the development of quality programs for young children is the element of competent teachers. Professional competence is probably the most important factor in determining the child's success in school.

While teacher educators have no difficulty in specifying courses and number of credit hours believed necessary for teaching, they do have difficulty specifying competencies involved in effective teaching. Attempts at specifying such competencies (known as generic competencies) lead quite naturally into the problem of role definition for teachers. For what should they be educated? Is the role of the teacher primarily one of working with parents, children, designing curriculum materials, keeping records or is it a combination of all of these? The problem seems to be in the view of the role of the teacher at both the pre-school and in-service levels.

Following a brief introduction regarding the nature of competency and a review of the literature, this presentation will focus on : 1) the importance of the teacher's interpersonal skills, 2) the re-examination

of the teacher as a leader, and 3) suggested guidelines for assessing and developing more effective teachers through the delineation of established areas of competence.

A fundamental assumption in the identification of professional competencies for early childhood educators starts from the premise that all children have certain developmental needs and that most children learn best in the kinds of environments which have been designed to meet those needs. Additional assumptions include:

1. There is a need for competent early childhood teachers.
2. Competencies can be identified. These competencies are ones which effect the quality of the program.
3. Competencies involve three components: knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
4. Performance is the major source of evidence of such competence.

The ultimate importance of the child's early experiences with his or her family as well as in any special program (Almy, 1975; Bloom, 1964; Butler, 1974; Hunt, 1961; Hymes, 1974) has been well defined. However, lack of sound research, particularly longitudinal studies which assess the outcomes of programs for young children, has been apparent.

Early childhood research encompasses the physical, psychological, and interpersonal environments which are deemed important to and for the development of young children (Brown, 1969; Hertzberg, 1971; Kohl, 1969; Rogers, 1970; Silberman, 1973). This paper addresses itself to those teacher behaviors especially in the area of interpersonal relations, thought to promote the optimum development and learning in young children.

It is evident that teacher behavior influences child behavior (Almy, 1975; Combs, 1971, Hunt, 1961). It is the assumption that underlies this

position paper. Although there are many variables affecting and acting upon the young child, it is the teachers themselves who are the crucial element. They are the ones who set the tone and prepare the environment for the growth and development of the children with whom they act and interact all day throughout the year.

Teachers, therefore, need to design their programs based upon the needs of the child rather than upon preconceived notions of what the child ought to be able to do. It is the contention of several early childhood experts (Almy, 1975; Hymes, 1974; Morrison, 1976) that what is needed seems to be a renewed recognition that schools are for children.

Moreover there remains a need to identify areas of competence for early childhood teachers who are responsible for planning and carrying out the daily program. More attention must be given to the kinds of teachers we place at this level in order to develop and maintain quality programs which will foster positive outcomes for children.

Definition of Terms

The following definition of terms will facilitate a more thorough understanding of the concept of competence.

Competence

This is defined as the ability to perform or do a particular task. It can be categorized in the following ways:

Knowledge competency

This includes knowledge of psychological theories, teaching strategies, program analysis, and subject matter to be taught.

Skill competency

This includes all procedures, operations, activities, and methods relating to classroom performance. Often there is an overlap with the knowledge competencies since the demonstration of the skill presupposes a knowledge base.

Attitudes competency

This includes the expression of values, beliefs, and emotional response. It is integral to the previous competency dimensions (Houston and Howsan, 1972).

It must be very clear that this discussion of teacher competence proceeds along three barely discreet lines. The nature of competence is "integrative" rather than "additive" (ECSTF, 1976). That is competence is viewed as a synthesis, rather than a collection of knowledge, skills, and attitudes. These components are formed and interact with each other to produce facilitative behaviors of the child and together they provide a basis for identification of those behaviors which make a competent teacher.

Literature Review

Using the general description of teacher behaviors obtained primarily from the literature search (Early Childhood Services Task Force on Teacher Competence, June, 1976) guidelines were established to obtain information on the effectiveness and interrelationship of particular behaviors. The content in which these behaviors occur describes a more accurate concept of "competence" in early childhood education.

The literature search in child development and early childhood education identified four areas of definition for teacher competence.

These areas are:

1. the purpose of early childhood programs
2. the environment of early childhood programs
3. the role of the teacher
4. a review of the nature and quality of research with teacher behavior

Purpose of early childhood programs

Children at various stages of development have a number of salient physical, social, and psychological needs. Many of their requirements are well known to early childhood professionals. The following list briefly summarizes those needs of children who are between the ages of four and seven.

1. nutrition
2. mental and verbal stimulation
3. peer play and fantasy play
4. large muscle activity
5. independence
6. learning control of internal impulses
7. affection, security, acceptance, and comfort
8. exploration and manipulation of materials
9. achievement (Early Childhood Services Task Force on Teacher Competence, 1976, p. 7).

Helping to meet the basic needs of children is the essential purpose of programs for young children. Thus, the approach to planning must be a holistic one, that of the whole child.

Environments

An increasing amount of evidence (Bessess and Bell, 1972; Dinkmeyer, 1970; Glasser, 1969; Piaget, 1965; Shapp, 1973) indicates a significant relationship between the cognitive (intellectual), psychomotor (behavioral), and affective (feeling) domain as well as between emotionally healthy feelings about oneself and the ability to relate to others. Although we have a strong tendency to talk of these three domains as separate entities, it is apparent that they cannot be separated. According to Morrison, this tendency

> encourages a fragmentation of teaching which can be deadening to children and also have a tendency to place an emphasis on the cognitive domain to the exclusion of the other two domains, particularly, the affective (p. 226).

The early childhood teacher who prepares an environment for children based upon the acceptance of the integration and interrelation of the three domains exhibits certain qualities and fundamental beliefs. Indicators of the kinds of behaviors and attitudes include a teacher who:

1. does not feel threatened by the children
2. respects and trusts children
3. is honest and accepting
4. believes in, and promotes individual differences in children
5. promotes feelings of warmth
6. avoids imposing values on children
7. encourages children to express their own ideas (Morrison, 1976).

ROLE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATOR: A Look at Interpersonal Relations

The role of the early childhood educator is based upon the premise that education is a continuous process of interaction with the physical and human

environment. A literature search (Early Childhood Services Task Force on Teacher Competence, 1976) led to the conclusion that human interaction should be viewed as the single most important ingredient in early childhood programs. In this context, the teacher's role in the development of the child is essential not only in providing appropriate materials but also in relating to each child in a positive manner. Research and programs for young children show that in order to maximize that contribution to the fullest, teachers should be relating to children in a way that insures:

1. the child's mastery and satisfaction in interactions with the physical environment, his peers, and adults and
2. consistency between the experience in the program and the characteristics the child brings to the program (p. 9).

These criteria have an effect in the approach that early teachers will take both in fulfilling their roles and in broadening the scope of their activities. Teachers in this capacity need a combination of personal characteristics, skills, and knowledge in order to be effective.

Nature and quality of research with teacher behavior

Of the research studies dealing with teacher competence and teacher behavior, the most comprehensive one was conducted by the Early Childhood Services Task Force on Teacher Competence in 1976. The study, which was both descriptive and observational in nature, sought information about specific behaviors of kindergarten teachers. Responses were solicited from 331 teachers, parents, and coordinators of kindergarten programs throughout Alberta, Canada.

According to the respondents of this study, the most essential competency for a kindergarten teacher was interpersonal competence; primarily

competence in leadership and communication skills. In addition, interpersonal competence is stressed by this group as the area in which they are most ill-prepared. Beyond this, they also strongly believe that their pedagogical knowledge needs a wider experiential base in order to provide them with the skills to make them effective in the classroom.

Results from this study indicated a high positive relationship among all competency dimensions. Teachers who exhibited skillful interpersonal behavior tended to organize material into meaningful programs. Conversely, teachers who were rated poorly in personal behavior were often inept in the area of program development.

A second and related set of competencies was developed by the Child Development Associate Consortium (CDA) which was formed in 1972 under the auspices of the Office of Child Development. Although this organization was designed to train and to assess child care para-professionals and to assign a credential to those assessed as being competent, the types of demonstrated competencies expected from CDA trainees are compatible with those one would expect from every early childhood educator.

Based upon the competencies developed by the Early Childhood Services Task Force (ECSTF) and the CDA, a third study (Isenberg, 1978) was conducted in the State of New Jersey to determine requisite competencies for the head teacher in day care programs. The target population of head teachers was responsible for planning and implementing programs for preschool children as well as for kindergarten children. Results from a survey study of 103 teachers and administrators indicated that those competencies deemed important to this teaching role were similar to those of the ECSTF and the CDA (Appendix A).

> As the need and demand for more pre-school programs grows and the accompanying use of aides, parents, and volunteers as an essential component of the program becomes a reality, the role of the teacher needs to be re-examined in light of these trends and changes. These new challenges call for a concomitant reexamination of the role of the classroom teacher as a leader.

Let me explore my conception of "leadership" with you for a few moments. Leadership can be viewed in many ways. First, according to Webster, a leader is one who "guides, conducts, escorts, directs, influences, induces or one who is ahead or 'at the head'.

Second, there is the military view of a leader as the General Patton type who manipulates, controls, orders.

Third, my view of leadership simply related to the ability to enable others to learn from what they do rather than from what is done to them. Further, this transfers directly into the relationships we have whether they be co-staff, parents, volunteers, or children.

Essesntially, the teacher has always been a leader of the young, although the tendency has not been to view her in such a role. Early childhood teachers have more often than not seen the role of the teacher as one who "advises and inspires" as opposed to one who "directs and instructs". Leadership as applied to the classroom teacher, simply means the ability to enable the child to learn from what he does rather than from what is done to him. According to Alice Yardley, the teacher

assumes the role of leadership through suggestion, stimulation, and example. That is, it is the leadership qualities that contribute greatly to a role model--a powerful factor in the development of young children.

The early childhood teacher can't avoid leadership. It is built into the whole process of teaching. It is the quality that enables people to get going or moving to get things done. This underlying concept is important to all of us--child and teacher, parent, aide or volunteer. Because so few of us understand what leadership really is, it is necessary to examine its principles and characteristics in general and then see how these apply to the classroom teacher.

Leadership is an interactional phenomenon which is built around three interdependent elements. It comes about through 1) individual traits (physical and mental), 2) group structure (ability to meet the needs of colleagues), and 3) situational functioning (the environment set up by virtue of people working together).

In addition, leadership is associated with the following concepts:

1. ability to see people in broad perspective and to make decisions on the basis of long term-not short term goals,

2. capacity to delegate authority as well as responsibility,

3. an open-minded receptivitity to suggestions and criticisms from peers and subordinates as well as superiors,

4. a willingness to risk- loss of approval and support by thinking independently and taking a firm stand (as saying no to a discipline procedure as behavior modification), and

5. competence in carrying on, integrating, and coordinating a number of highly varied interests and activities simultaneously.

Certainly all of these concepts reflect the responsibilities of the early childhood teacher in terms of setting up a quality program for young children.

The above characteristics are attributed to leadership. What, then, are the qualities of leadership and do we find these qualities among our early childhood teachers? For the most part, we do. The problem lies in the fact that we don't think of them as leadership qualities yet they are the very qualities upon which good leadership rests in any discipline. For example: such qualities as:

intelligence/integrity
vigor, vitality, verve
courage, fortitude, bravery
communication skills
persistence, patience
will, desire, ambition
and willingness to gamble

The foregoing qualities and characteristics are not unfamiliar ones to our teachers. The need for leadership is apparent and perhaps the most important factor in determining the success of the program. Unless a leader, and I use it synonymously with teacher, is able to meet the needs of his followers (staff) to THEIR satisfaction, he will not lead very long. Again, this concept applies across disciplines and is not relgated to a single discipline.

What are the specific tasks that require leadership qualities among early childhood teachers? We need to look at several things. I plan to outline three major areas this afternoon. These include:

1. the way in which the class room leader leads children for whom she is directly responsible (program development, instructional role),

2. the way in which she leads her staff (including assistant teachers, aides, volunteers, and resource people in a relational role), and

3. the way in which she records the development of the children with whom she works (decision-making role).

I. LEADING CHILDREN: INSTRUCTIONAL ROLE

The teacher's capacity to inspire children is her most influential form of leading them (Yardley). The capacity to inspire does not necessarily mean having an overly enthusiastic and vivacious teacher. It stems from the basic belief that a teacher who works hard at inspiring often succeeds more consistently than the more erratic, outgoing type. Inspiration can be cultivated and most teachers can be inspirational to children.

Where do you start? Start with personal interest. This leads to involvement and allowing yourself to become involved is a personal habit. Being involved with children incorporates knowing what "turns children on" so that you can share that enthusiasm with a child, (give example of a child interested in the World Series). Interest in and of itself comes as a result of effort. That is, teachers make the effort to be interested in the child and in what he has to say.

The attitude a teacher conveys in this way, along with their willingness to provide good and plentiful materials, will produce conditions which inspire. But.. you must know your children.....

Read example from Yardley pp. 92 and 93 re Miss Cooper

Thus, the teacher is responsible for planning a curriculum around the child. The key here lies in the word PLANNING and CHILD. There is a definite need to observe and take an interest in each

child. Otherwise, how do you know how to do this? Inherent in this task, lie definite leadership techniques. These skills are needed to plan and implement any program which is designed around the needs of the child. As Millie Almy notes, curriculum planning involves both school and the parents. It is concerned with process and the process skills of perceiving, communicating, loving, decision-making, knowing, organizing, and creating.

Furthermore, the teacher is also responsible for providing a happy place with opportunities for worthwhile play and work experiences so that children will grow and learn under the guidance of well-qualified teachers. The school must be a place where the child is engaged in interesting, stimulating activities relevant to their lifestyles, not a place for just "busy work".

How does a teacher plan and lead so that:

1. the child can acquire skills and work habits yet be flexible enough to live in a changing world and
2. the child can develop a pattern of work and play which will guide him in knowing how to work, how to use leisure and how to relax and rest?

Obviously, the teacher needs to utilize her knowledge about each child, the level of developmental tasks the child faces, and the sequence of learning skills. By selecting and guiding activities for young children, the teachers' skills and educational leadership qualities are evident.

All of this involves setting long range goals, analyzing pupil achievement and discovering each child's needs, planning a daily schedule, and selecting opportunities and activities. It is

a VERY important challenge. It takes a VERY special kind of person to do this so children are the ultimate winners. Planning based on goals of the program in an integrated way is essential. It must be remembered, however, that the choice of teaching topic cannot be based exclusively on the child's interests, nor is it entirely dependent on some incident. Rather, it is a combination of both. The most important question is: What am I trying to help the child learn to understand, to experience? Answer. Activities need to be planned around these questions.

II. STAFF RELATIONSHIPS: RELATIONAL ROLE

All early childhood teachers MUST work with other adults as part of their work. Much routine work needs to be done in the classroom. Teaching, then becomes MORE THAN interacting with and planning the curriculum for the children. Such routines as collecting money, buying food for snacks and cooking projects, gathering supples, and record keeping all must be done. They become less time consuming, however, if you establish a set of guidelines for each task and DELEGATE responsibility.

WORK WITH PARENTS

Identify principles of parent involvement (p 101 Thornberg)

There is a basic assumption in working with parents that, working together, both parents and teachers can benefit the child by creating positive home-school relations. Suggestions for enhancing this relationship include:

1. Parent-teacher meetings

   a. need to be organized around a common interest

   b. send a questionnaire to determine if parents are interested in group meetings

c. if interested, what specific topics would they like discussed?

d. allow parents to decide if they want meetings, how often they want them, when, where, and about what?

Suggest topics as: Aggression, Home-Safety, Toy Buying, Sex Education, T.V. (Give as handout, Thornberg, p. 104).

e. evaluate all meetings

Handout - with evaluation criteria

2. Get parents involved

In addition to parent meetings

Remember, it is easier NOT to get involved. Parents are concerned about cultural barriers, inadequate relations with school etc.

A. Use home visits

They establish a strong rapport; the child feels important

Parents feel part of the program

B. Use parents as Resources

Every parent has something to offer

Send questionnaire at the beginning of the year

C. Class Newsletter

By the teacher and the child

Include pictures, stories, schedule of the month

D. Assist with Field Trips

E. Be a classroom volunteer

F. Participate in Classroom Observation

Invite them to observe. This helps bridge the gap between home and school. Helpful to provide a guide to observation. For example: Do you encourage interaction with the children? Let parents in on this method of observing.

G. Have children prepare a "Dear Mom and Dad" letter
Let them tell the parents what is going on in school.

H. Have a parents day

I. Provide individual classroom scrapbooks

J. Send home "Positive notes" about the child

K. Telephone--Share a success

L. Utilize a parent bulletin board

M. Organize a parent library

N. Suggested Readings Handout (Thornberg, p. 117-119)

VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are very important to the early childhood program. All early childhood programs can benefit from them. The question for the teacher becomes...what to do with them once they are there? Planning for volunteers is just as essential as planning the curriculum for the children. The teacher has a major responsibility in organizing and leading the volunteers through a meaningful program in order to gain optimum development for the children.

WHO CAN BE A VOLUNTEER?

1. Parents...May be for a one time project or on a regular basis

WHAT CAN VOLUNTEERS DO?

1. special tutors for individual children
2. provide transportation for trips
3. talk to class about their professions
4. work with small groups on a task related to their hobby
5. some--work directly with the child, others, work on tasks not directly related to children but essential for a smooth functioning program of operation

Example: typing letters, class newspaper

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS

Benefits are derived by both the staff and the children

Teacher----has more time for individual instruction and to develop a child-oriented classroom

Child---more adult time aids child in developing a more positive self-image

TEACHER...MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

Managing a volunteer program in the classroom can work only if their is a commitment on the part of the teacher and her staff to see that it works...Again, it takes a special kind of person with those leadership qualities previously identified to make a volunteer program work.

In some cases, a volunteer coordinator is hired to recruit, orient, and train BUT the teacher needs training in order to utilize them properly and effectively in the classroom.

TRAINING

Some tasks require no special training. What is required are special instructions and support from an appropriate person.

Example: making curtains, puppet theatre, reading corner etc.

Volunteers who work with children need to know

1. the goals of the program
2. the schedule of the day
3. the expectations of the teacher
4. basic child development
5. guidance techniques used in that part of the classroom

   Positive statements games p. 125-130 (Handout)

6. Build in evaluation p. 132 of Thornberg

   Teach teachers <u>how</u> to evaluate their volunteer program.

For example:

1. do you feel welcome?
2. what things make you feel welcome?
3. what things make you feel unwelcome?
4. are you getting to know other volunteers?
5. is there someone at school you can talk to about the program? your role? or if you don't understand something?

RECORD KEEPING ASSESSING DEVELOPMENT

The present emphasis on accountability, management by objectives and pre-planning in terms of assessed needs makes it imperative that Early Childhood teachers be skilled in record keeping, especially in being objective as to what is recorded. The Freedom of Information Act requires open accessibility to <u>all</u> records unless otherwise waived in writing. Thus, record keeping becomes increasingly important and needs to be a joint venture with the parent.

Recording information during the preschool years provides an excellent opportunity for obtaining accurate information regarding

a child. Why? Because it establishes a bond and makes for closer understanding. Never again will the parents express personal feelings, family problems and other sources of information so freely as they do with the child's pre-school and kindergarten, teacher. It is fertile ground for beginning to help the child grow and to help the parent see the child as he really is and what suitable environments will enhance such development.

Care must be taken in keeping records and not in using scores and numbers alone. Accurate descriptions of anectdotes, accounts of incidents etc. become a basis for a child's later life. Therefore, the teacher must be skilled in sharing both the childs strengths and weaknesses with the parents. Sharing this information requires a special kind of person.

WHAT TO RECORD

Consistent with changing points of view, what is considered to be important information to know about the young child's development has also changed drastically during the last decade. New terminology, new evaluations, use of tests and direct measures continues for more meaningful ways of determining behavioral growth and change in young children. A high demand for accountability continues in early childhood education as it does in other areas of the educational discipline.

RATIONALE FOR RECORD KEEPING (Leeper)

We often hear objections to in depth record keeping on the part of the early childhood educator. WHY? Some people feel it biases the reader and may even do harm to the child. What does this mean? The medical profession and child development specialists for years

have recognized the value of cumulative developmental records. Teachers who are truly professional know the importance of past behavioral development of the children they teach and why it has occured.

If we assume, as has been discussed today, that curriculum development and variations are based upon the needs of each group of children involved, the teacher is at a distinct disadvantage without records. Record keeping then becomes a major charge and task. We must take the challenge and provide excellent leadership in this capacity.

Teachers need to be able to answer:

1. What should I know about this child and why?

2. What should be known about this child's health history, family, neighborhood?

Use a standard form with built in flexibility to enable maximum opportunities for each child. Can't rely on memory in this case and can't depend on accurate recall of events.

KINDS OF RECORDING

1. FOLDERS: Keep samples of children's work, dated, comments

2. FORMATIVE/SUMMATIVE EVALUATION

With the implementation of Management by Objectives in the Head Start program, stress is placed on the behavioral development. That is, the teacher assesses the outcome of the program in terms of identifying, prior to instruction, what the stated outcomes or results are expected to be. Thus, the teacher must be able to SHOW to what degree each objective has been achieved.

Example: p491 LEEPER to record his or her name in print by January

Example: a general goal to classify by form, size, color

Whatever the objective, it needs to be assessed and some means of

recording needs to take place immediately following the assessment. Formative and summative evaluation merely means the assessment of where the child is if instruction is to be meaningful. It must be remembered that the rate of acievement varies among the children and daily records are necessary.

Formative evaluation....takes place while teaching is going on

Summative evaluation....end of the program or unit

RECORDING DEVELOPMENT - Provide checklists in Handouts

Case study

anecdotals

behavior journals

tests

PPVT, ITPA, Bayley scales of Infant development and Lexington Developmental scales

CONCLUSION

In sum, we have noted that early childhood teachers are already leaders in the classroom. The challenge lies in the ability to begin to accept this role and to develop means and strategies to enhance it.

SUGGESTED GUIDELINES

Results from these three surveys (CDA: 1976, ECSTF: 1976; Isenberg; 1978) as well as a review of the literature have tapped several dimensions which indicated 5 broad areas of importance for early childhood educators in order to be considered "competent". From these studies, suggested guidelines can be drawn in order to determine what basic skills should be required of the kindergarten teacher. These skills incorporate five areas:

1) child development; 2) classroom management; 3) interpersonal relations; 4) personal competence; and 5) program design.

Child development

Early childhood educators must demonstrate the ability to look to good theory as the basis for the curriculum. S/he must deliberately build the program on the best knowledge of why s/he is teaching, whom s/he is teaching, what s/he is teaching, and how s/he is teaching.

1. Teachers in these programs keep their goals utterly clear.
2. Teachers in these programs are child-centered.
3. Teachers in these programs are society-centered.
4. Teachers in these programs are subject-matter centered.
5. Teachers in these programs have the tools they need to do the job (Hymes, 1975, pp. 34-35).

Classroom management

Early childhood educators must demonstrate the ability to handle behavior of both individuals, small groups, and large groups of children by using effective, democratic procedures. Some of these procedures and skills include the ability to:

1. provide a well-paced program
2. plan and carry out the educational program
3. deal with different types of behavior
4. use praise and encouragement to reward desired behaviors
5. establish clear behavioral limits
6. provide appropriate activities for the developmental level of each child (Isenberg, 1978)

Interpersonal relations

Early childhood educators must demonstrate the ability to facilitate the child's mastery and satisfaction in interactions with his/her peers and adults as well as the physical environment. S/he will also help to stimulate the child's exploration of the environment and view success and failure as informative rather than punitive. Suggested skills in this area include the ability to:

1. support the child's goals in a particular activity
2. recognize and use individual characteristics
3. provide a socially and psychologically safe environment for children
4. provide the structure and encouragement necessary for children to explore, learn, and master their environment
5. respond to the context, motivation, and significance of behavior
6. communicate effectively (ECSTF, 1976).

Personal competence

Early childhood educators must serve as an effective role model of behavior for children as well as for other adults. The teacher will demonstrate the ability to:

1. understand her/himself
2. express curiosity and exploratory behavior to children
3. express a sense of humor and perspective
4. accept people without prejudice
5. be committed to human growth

6. be flexible

7. be emotionally responsive

Program design

Early childhood educators must demonstrate the ability to relate the use of time, space, and activities to the developmental levels, learning abilities, and the individual characteristics of children. S/he will demonstrate the ability to:

1. involve parents, professionals, and other people in the planning and implementation of the program
2. facilitate language development
3. promote problem-solving behaviors among children
4. facilitate sensory-motor development
5. increase the child's self-knowledge

It is hoped that these suggested guidelines, which have explored today, can be used to generate higher quality pre-service and in-service programs. There are many ways of implementing them. Here are a few starters:

1. Use as a criterion of performance towards the development of higher quality programs for young children.
2. Develop a program of on-going staff-development based upon one or more of these areas
3. Establish guidelines for staff selection
4. Establish parent education programs related to teacher competency to be used in selecting programs for young children
5. Conduct staff development workshops based upon selected competency guidelines.

6. Use as a self-evaluation instrument

7. Develop a knowledge/skills needs analysis as a basis for in-service and pre-service training (Appendix 3)

SUMMARY

Such guidelines for describing the kinds of competencies one could look for in selecting teachers for young children should be evident among all staff who work with young children in ANY type of program. The assumption starts from the premise that these are basic skill areas required of all staff.

The absolute acceptance that the teacher is crucial to the child's total development cannot be underscored enough. Children are learning predominately from their immediate experiences with people, places, and things. It is the quality of teacher mediation and guidance during these experiences that has the greatest impact on learning. We cannot overlook the necessary competencies in selecting and training teachers for this most important professional role.

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DR. JOAN ISENBERG
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
NAEYC ANNUAL CONVENTION
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Requisite Competencies for the Early Childhood Educator: Suggested Guidelines for use in Pre-Service and In-Service Education.

AGENDA

Introduction

Definition of Competency

Brief Review of the Literature

Role of the Early Childhood Educator: A Look at Interpersonal Relations and Leadership Qualities

Suggested Guidelines for Implementation

Summary

Open Discussion

Evaluation

Handouts:

1. Leadership Attitude Inventories
2. Positive Statements Game
3. Bibliography

The following 5 pages of the original document are copyrighted and therefore not available. The questionnaires and Appendix A are not included in the pagination

Transparencies:

1. Assumptions
2. Definition of Terms
3. Areas of Teacher Competence from the Literature
4 & 5 Questionnaire
6. Defining Leadership
7. Leadership with Parents
8. Suggested Guidelines

Appendix B

Knowledge/Skills Needs Analysis Profile

Position: Early Childhood Teacher

Name:

Date:

Competency	Importance to Profession 1. Minor 2. Average 3. Major	Present Ability 1. Poor 2. Fair 3. Excellent Very Good	Priority 1. Low 2. Average 3. High
Works cooperatively with other staff.	-	-	-
Takes charge in emergencies.	-	-	-
Observes children objectively.	-	-	-
Listens to what children say.	-	-	-
Plans a well-paced program.	-	-	-
Provides appropriate developmental activities	-	-	-

POSITIVE STATEMENTS GAME

(1) Don't stand on the table.

(2) You know, we don't run in the room.

(3) Put down the scissors.

(4) Lisa, don't push Johnny, he'll fall down.

(5) We don't bring guns to school.

(6) I cannot let you hit Johnny; it hurts him so much.

(7) Stop running!

(8) Nice boys don't spit on people.

(9) You're not supposed to take three crackers.

(10) I told you not to put walnuts in the fish bowl.

(11) Don't color on the table.

(12) Don't stuff your mouth.

(13) Quit yelling inside.

(14) Shut the gerbil cage.

(15) Where did you get that match?

(16) Didn't I just tell you not to put paper towels in the toilet?

(17) Don't ride the truck over here.

(18) You can't throw sand.

(19) You need to hang up your coat.

Source:

Thomburg, Kathy. The Whole Teacher (An Early Childhood Program Guide). Atlanta, Ga.: Humanics, Limited, 1977.